TO THE ELECTORS

OF

ESQUIMALT AND METCHOSIN DISTRICT.

GENTLEMEN,—The Legislative Assembly has been dissolved; a General Election will shortly ensue. Since the occurrence of a similar event more than three years have elapsed.

During that period the Colony has greatly increased in trade, wealth, and population. The undoubted richness of the gold-fields, the augmentation of settlements, and the peculiar position of affairs in neighbouring countries, afford every reason to believe that such prosperity will not only continue, but that the future will see a more rapid improvement. No impediment must be placed in the way of so desirable a career.

Satisfactory as the commercial progress of the country has been, it is to be regretted that, notwithstanding the existence of a liberal land pre-emption system, agricultural and other production, although increased, has not kept pace therewith. Much of this doubtless is owing to people finding more inviting openings for investment, or more seductive fields for labour, but the difficulty of access to outlying districts is also a well-known prominent cause. If communication with our own were as frequent and regular as with foreign places, many articles now imported would be produced at home. The inconvenience of depending upon foreign supply for those things which can be readily raised within our own boundaries, has lately been brought home to us in a very pertinent and distasteful manner.

The encouragement of Agricultural Settlements is of the utmost importance—easy access thereto and frequent communication therewith not less so. It will, therefore, be advisable to subsidize a vessel to make regular trips to the various settlements—not only for the purpose of carrying the mails, but also to convey people at a moderate charge. Owing to the mountainous conformation of the Island, this will be at once the most convenient and economical for all concerned. The sum voted for a similar service by the late Assembly having been found inadequate, an addition thereto must be made.

The establishment of Fisheries is of great moment, and the cultivation of Fish in our Lakes, so abundant and so well adapted for the purpose, should be promoted.

Every inducement should be held out to encourage the erection of Saw mills and the working of the mines of coal and metals, so well known to exist. In short, every effort must be made to develope the natural resources of the Colony, and to encourage the investment of capital in industrial pursuits and works of public importance.

The establishment of a Museum containing specimens of the productions of the Island, and of the waters surrounding the same, could not be otherwise than advantageous.

The diffusion of information relative to the progress of agricultural science would be of great value to farmers, in enabling them to compete with their own labour against capital, machinery and science combined. The promotion of Agricultural Societies would tend greatly towards this end.

The system of Government, not being defined and trammelled by a written Constitution, must be a progressive development; circumstances, conditions, necessity, convenience, example, and economy, will each have a share in fashioning its parts. As changes are required, so must they be made, always guarding, on the one hand, against premature development; and taking care, on the other, to promote necessary advancement. By such means, as time progresses and population increases, there will be continually forming a system suitable to the period and congenial to the mind and genius of the people. Whilst, therefore, the PRESENT is the most important, the FUTURE should not be lost sight of, and the lesson taught by the past should be held in remembrance.

Even now, greater intimacy between the Executive and the Legislature is advisable. Although it is essential that the Legislature be made acquainted with the views and intentions of Her Majesty's Representative, it is equally important that the latter should be aware of the opinions of the former, in order that the measures recommended may be agreeable therewith. It appears, therefore, at least expedient that the so-called "Representative of the Government!"—who is the Government?—the Representative of Her Majesty cannot be—should be really such; and he therefore should select from among the Members of the Assembly a certain number holding opinions analogous to his own. Members of the Legislative Council and the Law Officers should be included therein, and the heads of Department might, for the purpose of affording information, be associated therewith, when necessary or required. The main function of this body should be to confer with the Representative of Her Majesty upon the measures necessary to the welfare of the country; and, when produced, to support and explain the same in the two Legislative bodies. They might be termed a Privy Council, or any more agreeable name. Of course, if the Governor and Council could not agree, the former could choose another Representative, and be other members, as before. If the measures recommended to the House meet with approbation, well and good; but if the contrary, another Council must be chosen from the majority, or an appeal to the country be made. The members of this Council should not receive any pay or emolument. By such a combination, a Constitutional form of Government would be instituted; one possessing sufficient responsibility, and at the same time suited to present requirements, with the advantage of being free from the vice of being the cause of creating a race of political patriots, for the sake of the profits to be derived therefrom.

The Heads of Departments being the intelligent physical forces for carrying out the behests of the Government, should retain their various offices. The occasional bringing into contact those Heads, and evoking the intellectual forces therefrom, could not be otherwise than beneficial, for various purposes. Extra pay could scarcely be asked for the unusual labour.

In a country undergoing a constantly advancing transition, there can neither be perfection nor finality in legislation. Unforeseen circumstances arise, which must either be fostered or remedied, according to their tendency for good or evil.

The qualification of Electors, although suited to the day of its birth, requires amendment. Representation should be contingent upon taxation and coincident therewith. Those only who contribute towards the revenue should have a voice in the expenditure of that fund.

To extend the suffrage to as many as possible, taxation should be brought to bear upon as great a number. It would not be repugnant to such a scheme to allow, under certain restrictions, residents to enjoy the privilege of being placed upon the Register, on the payment of certain rates per head. Those possessing incomes from sources other than those already assessed, ought to contribute towards the support of the Government of which they receive the benefit. It need hardly be said, that such a system would amalgamate with the policy of free trade and direct taxation. By such means, the burden would be more generally and more equitably distributed—a condition highly necessary—and greater interest excited towards the affairs of the Colony.

Capital invested in production within the Colony should not be assessed upon the amount, but upon the income derived therefrom. Funds of charities should be exempt, but lands belonging to religious denominations should know no exception, save and except so much thereof as may be required for places of worship and residence of the incumbent.

Harbour Dues should not be charged upon Coloniol vessels, whether engaged in domestic or foreign trade, but a tax be levied upon the amount accruing from that, as from any other business. Goods *in transitu* to foreign parts ought to be free from the charge levied by landing permits.

Pilots should be Government officers, in receipt of a certain, not precarious, salary.

School mistresses for the education of girls are as important as men for boys. Military exercise ought to be a part of juvenile education. In many districts, it would be better for the teacher to visit the pupils, than *vice versa*.

The most intimate connection and friendly relations ought to be cultivated with our sister Colony, British Columbia. Although her geographical position, local peculiarities, the requirements of the country, and the easy acquisition of revenue, renders an opposite commercial policy and separate existence necessary and advantageous *to each as a whole*, yet British interest, loyalty, commercial ties, mutual benefits, and the love for our mother country, form a very strong bond of union. Separate, then, yet united, the policies apparently antagonistic, if looked at in this light, are harmonious. More prosperous being separate than an *amalgamated one*, each can look on and glory in the welfare and advancement of the other, and can aid and assist therein. It would be of reciprocal advantage if the vessels of both Colonies were allowed to enter each other's ports and rivers free of charge, and that our coal and other productions be admitted duty free.

There are many other subjects that might be touched upon, but they must be left to our future meeting.

It remains now for me to ask the honor of re-election, and I do so with the full knowledge of your approbation. We have lived together and known each other long enough, both politically and otherwise, to render the usual protestations and assertions of honesty, and so on, necessary. If you elect me for the third time, it will be at once my duty and pleasure to do the best that a fifteenth part of the Assembly can, to promote the general interest of the Colony, being quite convinced of that being the way to bring prosperity to our hearths, homes, and ain firesides.

I remain, &c.,

J. S. HELMCKEN.

HELMCKEN COLLECTION